

The Clipper Visits... Mary Beth Ladd

By MARTHA HIMES

Twenty-five years ago, The Roster pages of the Clipper were born. Edited by Mary Beth Ladd for the past two decades, The Roster was begun by the PTA Council, the umbrella organization for all the separate school PTAs in Duxbury.

"They started it up and it went for a year or so, but they



just couldn't get the momentum going and it would just be in sporadically," she said. "John

and Bobbie Cutler wanted it to be in all the time and the PTA wanted it to be in all the

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time, so they made a special effort." In the early 1980s, the PTA assembled a committee of six: Ladd, Judith Montminy, Anne Henning, Elaine Wiemeyer, Leslie Flanagan, and Valerie DiMascio. They all took photographs, and they took turns rotating responsibilities such as editing and layout.

"Leslie Flanagan had worked for a magazine doing paste-up, so she trained us," Ladd said. Laying out "The Roster" blended perfectly with Ladd's interests—she had studied commercial art for two years at Mississippi State College for Women and the University of Massachusetts in Boston. While she didn't complete her degree, leaving college to marry, her interest and background in art remained and helped her with layout and paste-up.

"We'd sit and talk and paste it up. It was a lot more work then but it was fun. I liked the hands-on part of layout," she said.

Ladd, who moved to Duxbury from Sudbury in 1979, initially became involved due to her involvement with the PTA. She had been the president of the Chandler School PTA.

"I'd been in the school a lot, and I knew how important 'The Roster' was to the PTA and the school. So after I was president, I said, that's what I want to do: I want to do publicity," she said.

When "The Roster" started, the group collected all the information and took all the photographs.

"I used to do the middle school dances, and I'd take the camera, and the second I'd walk in, I was the most popular person there. I'd get three or four kids and they'd say, 'would you take our picture?' and by the time I looked into the lens of the camera there were probably twenty kids there. Actually, they were always the cutest pictures, because the kids were so candid," Ladd said.

Eventually, the group gradually disbanded as its members took on other responsibilities such as children or jobs. Jeannie Casey helped with "The Roster" until the mid-1980s, when Ladd assumed the mantle of editing "The Roster" herself and has been doing it ever since.

Now information is sent to Ladd, usually by the PTA publicity committee, which assigns a person to collect information each month. She goes through everything and, if necessary, edits it for



length. Ladd receives the information on Wednesday, edits it and sends it to the Clipper by 8:30 Friday morning, when Rita Luckey scans the photos and lays the pages out.

"Rita and I go way back," Ladd said. "She was secretary at Chandler School when I was PTA president."

Ladd's background at the Clipper laying out "The Roster" and a recommendation from John Cutler got her a job at the MPG newspapers once. She worked there for about a year. Now, when not at work on "The Roster," Ladd is hard at work at her job compiling environmental market research for a Hingham insurance firm.

Ladd even uses her Clipper layout skills in her leisure time, creating scrapbooks. She also collects antiques, especially anything with strawberries on it—strawberry crate labels, ceramic strawberries, strawberry linens—because her grandparents owned a strawberry farm in Indiana.

The hardest part of compiling "The Roster," Ladd said, is getting a reliable and steady stream of information. The best part is opening the paper and seeing how the final product looks.

Ladd, 52, is married to Roger Ladd, Duxbury firefighter. "When I married Roger, that put me one step higher" in the eyes of John Cutler, Ladd said. "He had a lot of admiration for the guys in the fire department. He was one of their best cheerleaders."

The Ladds have three children: Matt, 29, and Ashley, 25, from Mary Beth's previous marriage, and Doug, 20, from Roger's previous marriage. And now they have a new daughter-in-law: Becca, Matt's new wife.

Although Ladd's children are now grown, she still edits "The Roster" because she enjoys the work, and feels that the pages are an important asset to the community. "I like doing it, and I wouldn't want there to not be a 'Roster,'" she said.

(See our special Roster page in Section B — Ed.)